

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 5 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 2-4 and 6-7 have been amended to differently recite the invention. New claim 8 has been added. The pending claims are now claims 2-4 and 6-8.

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to the specification; rejected claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b); rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a); and objected to claims 3, 4, 6, and 7 as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants traverse these objections and rejections, at least for the following reasons.

Applicants have amended the specification in accordance with the Examiner's helpful suggestion. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the specification.

Applicants have canceled claims 1 and 5 and have rewritten claims 3, 4, 6, and 7 in independent form in accordance with the suggestion in the pending Office Action. At least in view of the indication in the Office Action that claims 3, 4, 6, and 7 are directed to allowable subject matter, Applicants submit that these claims, and any claims depending therefrom, should now be in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the art rejections applied under 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103 is respectfully requested.

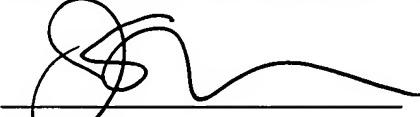
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that the pending claims are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request reconsideration and the timely allowance of the pending claims. Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this response, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative to expedite prosecution. A favorable action is awaited.

Except for issue fees payable under 37 C.F.R. § 1.18, the Commissioner is hereby authorized by this paper to charge any additional fees during the entire pendency of this application including fees due under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 and 1.17 which may be required, including any required extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0310. This paragraph is intended to be a **CONSTRUCTIVE PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME** in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a)(3).

Respectfully submitted,

MORGAN, LEWIS & BOCKIUS LLP



John G. Smith
Registration No. 33,818

Dated: May 21, 2004

Customer No. 009629
MORGAN, LEWIS & BOCKIUS LLP
1111 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 739-3000